arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances towards a Spanish woman. . . .

"Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain respect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

●756 "As in all the tribes of this America, there are among our Mataguayos certain doctors or wizards, whom they call "yegu." They are feared and respected. Those who wish to enter this profession go off into the uninhabited areas for a few days, fast rigorously and run about continuously day and night. Their manner of effecting a cure is to lean their whole bodies right over the sick person, who is lying on the ground, place both hands in the form of a tube over the affected and painful parts and then blow with all their might emitting at the same time a series of hoarse bellows. They persevere in this treatment for hours on end and even all night long. By way of payment they are given anything they ask for to the point that the invalid may be left naked, but if the sick person should not recover, his relatives will insist that everything be returned. When an epidemic of some sort appears in the village or in the surrounding villages, all the yegus come together, sit down a short distance away from the group of huts and with their faces turned toward them burst forth into a melancholy song accompanied by the sound of some small gourds filled with stones which they shake at the same time. They think that this will frighten the pestilence away or prevent its entering."

164 "A common malady among the Mataguayos is mange, and the disease which ravages them most is pleurisy. As soon as they become ill they shave their heads and call the yegu. When an invalid starts 763 to die he is taken to the place where he is to be buried and there, in 764 order to have him avoid the anguish of his last moments, he is choked to death. The body, not extended but half raised, is placed in a rather shallow hole which, after being covered with branches and grass, has earth thrown on it."

768 "On returning from the funeral all the equipment which belonged to the deceased is broken up; his hut is dismantled and taken to a new spot [596] or at the very least the door through which he [764] passed on being carried out to his grave is covered over. Each village has its own common burial ground which is always close at hand."

765 "The deceased's relatives gather around the grave on the night following the burial, and perform the funeral rites with lugubrious clamorings and drumming on their pimpines. For some time they abstain from eating fish and other meats.

774 "They have a vague notion of the soul which they call Neuseh of which they believe that it outlives the body and transmigrates into

776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new
791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance,
776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a
846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

●756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which
[753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

● 756 or dies from purely natural causes. So when a person becomes sick or has any pain, the sorcerer is immediately called to take away the pain or to restore health. And let no one think that the sorcerer (witchdoctor) must feel the pulse of the sick person or make him stick out his tongue or confuse him and his relatives with the many questions with which our doctors confuse us—no, this would seem to them to be an admission of ignorance and furthermore, highly impertinent; nor do they cudgel their brains to find the cause of the infirmity or care whether there be herbs or special remedies to combat it—not at all, for it would only be a waste of time. Their method of effecting a cure is more simple. The patient having said that he feels pain in such and such a place, the witchdoctor does nothing other than to place his hands on the affected part, but he places them together and half-closed, in such a way that they are in the shape of a hollow vessel, exactly as when boys, with half-closed hands wish to imitate the sound of a trumpet or horn. And with their hands in that way, they begin to blow through [605] them with all the lung power at their command, accompanying the puffing with groans and howls, and persevering in this for hours on end, repeating the ceremony with greater or less frequency according to the state of the invalid and the possibility of payment for their work. Those who have nothing must yet give something to the witchdoctor, and those who have possessions must determine to give all of them to him, and they do so. Some however appear to doubt or at least to mistrust the witchdoctor's ability, for although they will give him all he asks for beforehand, they force him to return everything if his treatment is not efficacious. The one who is most fortunate in the recovery of his patients is the one who acquires most prestige, and he makes a good living. If the patient gets worse, and the witchdoctors see that he is going to die they usually declare him beyond recovery and abandon him in order not to lose prestige, and make excuse as to the incurability of the disease by claiming that some more powerful evil power is acting against him.

[763] Often, if the witchdoctor who states that the patient is past hope is of some fame, the relatives of the patient will take the sick man out to the burial grounds while he is still alive, will dig his grave, choke him to death and bury him. When, on the other hand, one of their leaders or some person of great influence or having many relatives or who is generally well liked becomes seriously ill or is close to death, then there is usually a consultation or general gathering of all the

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●756 witchdoctors of the vicinity, who never declare the man beyond re-
554 covery but bend their every effort in making a great show of their ridiculous and childish practices in order to make death keep away. Gathered, then, in the invalid's hut, they stand about him at some little distance in a semicircle and do not take their eyes off him but observe his every movement with care. They begin to blow and gesture with their hands, now forcefully and with verve, now slowly and softly according as they see that the patient seems more fatigued or gets back some of his strength; and all this in order to pretend that they see death approaching and are trying to chase it away. In the
[533] same manner they begin to sing in base, funereal tones an air similar to a continuous harsh howling, and, being guided by the condition of the invalid they modify their expressions, gestures and tone of voice. The stricken person for his part always tries, by means of his fatigue, his cries or moans, his frightened eyes and perturbed expression to let the others know what he is feeling and the state he considers himself to be in; and the witchdoctors, following these obvious signs, gesticulate more or less, blow and howl with greater or less softness [606] or loudness, come close and hurl themselves wildly towards the invalid or gently fall back a short distance. When it seems that the sick man is about to die they come at a bound so close to him, heightening their gestures to such a pitch and howling so unceasingly and in such broken, forced and hoarse tones, with eyes so wide open and fearful and with so many expressions of terror, that anyone could easily be led to believe that they do in fact see death in the guise of some deformed and terrible figure and that they wish to frighten it, make it flee or seize it. All this is done so seriously and naturally that no one would suspect them of perpetrating a hoax or deceiving; but the fact is that even if the invalid were still able to live for a while, terror would soon finish him off."

"The witchdoctors are also believed to have the power to drive away and make disappear plagues and calamities such as smallpox, which wreaks havoc among them; the lack of water or its excess and other things. To this end the witchdoctors meet, go off a little way from the camp and, seated upon the ground, like so many Jeremiahs, begin to sing their lamentations, without words of course, accompanying
[534] the sad song with the choc-que-choc produced by the coming together of small stones placed in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

142 that they habitually eat fish and fruit and very little meat, with some [262] exceptions. The teeth in the young are good and whole, but in older persons they are either lacking or are worn down [175] and ugly. The enamel on their teeth is not, in my opinion, like ours, its whiteness is the whiteness of bone, and not of ivory, and I am almost at the point of believing that it is less resistant. Their gums and lips are of a faded pink color. Can this be caused by their diet? They do not eat [263] salt because they do not have it, but they like it very much and relish it as though it were sugar when they are given some. Their lips are thick, somewhat protruding and turned outwards. Almost all of them have slightly slanted eyes, the lower apex inclined towards the nose in the shape of an almond -- there are some, though, who have round, horizontal eyes, which are inky black, the whites looking as though someone had put a little blueing into them; while the whites of the slanted eyes have seemed to me often to have a bilious greenish shade to them, especially among the aged.

Their noses are long, straight and flattened, the nostrils also flattened and extraordinarily wide, but not snubbed. This business of [262] snubnoses is one of their great worries, so much so that they will not eat mutton because they assert that doing so would make their noses take the shape of sheep noses. This is a trick of their medical quacks and [756] witch doctors who, in order to prevent the destruction of their flocks and with them the loss of the little wool which they weave and is useful to them, have invented this pious deception so similar to others which are familiar to us. So it is that all of us all over the world and in all periods are alike in matters of artfulness and pride.

Their hair is straight and coarse, but in a very few individuals I have noted slightly wavy hair, almost kinky, though I know not whether it be so naturally or artificially. I have also noticed, in some, incipient baldness. The hair of adult individuals is jet black, [165] and white among the aged, but this is not often encountered, I suppose because only rarely do they achieve any age to speak of. Among children up to ten or twelve years old the hair is often reddish which is a strange phenomenon and calls to mind Salles' theory that primitive man must have had red hair. We may have here an example of 302 [165] atavism. They wear their hair long and unkempt, but cut it short for a whole year when in mourning. This does not mean that they do not

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that the a'hót is really answering, not realizing that it is a ventriloqual trick.

I have remarked a number of times in these notes that the witch doctors are the mediators between the a'hóts and men, but they are also, in addition to this priestly function, doctors, -- in fact they are priests by reason of their being doctors. [756]

The association of religion with medicine seems to be a constant factor among primitive peoples and also among the uneducated classes of the present civilization. This fact provides fuel for reflection of a philosophic-historical type. According to historians there is every indication that it was already present among the American peoples and even Oviedo mentions coming upon it [204] in the island of Hispaniola. Robertson, that sober and wise historian of America explains the phenomenon succinctly when he says: "Superstition in its primitive form had its roots in man's natural impatience to free himself from a present evil and did not grow out of fear of the evils which awaited him in the life to come. So it is that its origin stems from medicine and not from religion."

I have no indication that the superstition of these Indians goes together with any cruel practice, nor have I read anything to the effect that this is the case among the other American savages.

The luxury of cruelty seems to be the exclusive prerogative of religions, among them being those primitive ones of Perú and, especially, Mexico.

Chapter X

The Cult of Graves

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The Indians practice a "grave cult," and it can be asserted that they have always done so.

Near the city of Santiago del Estero I have seen their burial mounds and the earthen jars they contain.

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man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

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In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a'hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

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Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

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I, who used to stay up very late, both to do my stint at guard duty and to take advantage of a few uninterrupted hours for study, used to take up a stand close to them. At first my presence there made them keep quiet, but later on, taking heart at my reiterated hiss tzilataj ("very pretty"), and seeing that I did not make fun of them, they continued in spite of my being there.

At last, after twenty days, the sick man got well.

One of the very strange treatments is the one which they ad- 752
minister to those who have been poisoned by a sting ray, which fish can administer an extremely painful and sometimes mortal wound. This treatment consists in placing the offended part, which is usually the ankle, over the smoke given off from the cracks in burning palo santo [lignum vital --Translator], which is a resinous wood, after which a woman in her menstruating period is to sit astride it. I have been assured by whites who have made the experiment that it is a very efficacious remedy.

Every treatment for sickness or wounds however needs, if it 756●
is to have any virtue, to be in the hands of a witch doctor (male), or at least in those of a female witch doctor.

Not everyone can be a witch doctor, and just as the members of this profession make their patients pay according to the seriousness of the malady and the means of the individual, either in skins, animals, food or other things, so also does this profession have its seamy side in which quarrels and deception occur. In addition to this and in order to get greater prestige they shroud themselves in mystery and the supernatural. So it is that in the village of Granadero the Indians, speaking about a young man who was already embarked on this career, said that as a boy he had vanished and then reappeared after two years which he had spent underground among the a'hot, these a'hot having carried him off in order to instruct him in the art and imbue him with the virtues of doctor and priest.

While on the subject of these frauds I must tell of an occasion 123
when things almost took a bad turn for me. I went to call on 755
Chief Granadero who was just recovering from a long illness. I had with me, as is my custom, a pocket inkwell and a pen. Granadero noticed these things and asked me what they were. I, thinking to please him flourished the inkwell and pen and set about writing, but saw in a moment that Granadero had become furious and menacing -- his doctors had just cured him of the a'hot which

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba S/12

his soul is taken up to Paradise, *Piyim*, by his *peyák nŏtta*. Similarly, the medicine-men are believed to be able to make, with the aid of their guardian spirits, occasional journeys to *Piyim* even in their life-time. The Tobas address prayers to these spirits and even offerings are made to them.

The medicine-men of the *M a t a c o* also have a »good spirit» (*aitták is*), of which much the same holds true as has been said of the »good spirits» of the Tobas and the Choroti. The *aitták is* of the Mataco is however surnamed *aitták talák*, i.e. »the Old One», and to that extent seems to be more strongly personified than the corresponding tutelary genius of the Tobas and the Choroti. The Old One of the Mataco is not a »Supreme Being» of the kind which is supposed to exist among certain primitive tribes; he is neither a creator of the world nor a guardian of morality. He is the particular guardian spirit of the medicine-men and plays his most important rôle in connection with the conjurations by means of which the latter try to cure disease. The Mataco ascribe disease to the operation of evil spirits. The cure, as usual, is effected by the expulsion of the evil intruder, but the medicine-man's own art is insufficient for that. He needs supernatural aid, and this aid is afforded him by the *aitták talák*.

The goodness of the »Old One» however seems to be only relative; capriciousness is one of his properties. In some cases he helps and cures or relieves the patient; but in other cases he gives no relief however much he is invoked. The great question in a case of sickness is consequently: Is the Old One in a good temper and propitious or not? If the patient recovers through the treatment of the medicine-man, the Mataco say: *is aitták talák*, »The Old One is good». On the other hand, if the patient dies, they say: »This time the Old One was not good».

It is hardly necessary to point out that the belief of the Chaco Indians in a »good spirit» is not due to Christian influence but is genuinely Indian. At the time when I visited the tribes of the Rio Pilcomayo they were very little affected by European civilization, both in their religion and in their general culture, and the savage Ashluslay, who also believe in a »good spirit», not at all. Besides, we know that the idea of individual guardian spirits, invoked by the medicine-men and assisting them in their operations, is by no means an exceptional phenomenon among the Chaco Indians, but is met with among many other Indian tribes also, both in South and in North America.

It has long been a current opinion among anthropologists that the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913) 1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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the body of some animal. The magical nature of these ornaments was likewise obvious.

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Among the *M a t a c o*, who in general are more addicted to religion and superstition than the Choroti, the character of facial painting as a magical charm is more conspicuous. These Indians give facial painting different names according as it is used by men or women and depending on its colour. Thus the red painting of women is called *eruháh*, whereas the red painting of the men is called *oväittáh* (a name evidently derived from the word *aittáh* demon). The black painting is called *letáh*. It is especially used as a sign of sorrow. When a Mataco man dies, his widow and daughters blacken their faces with charcoal, regarding this as a protection against the death-demon. Similarly, for some time after a death the younger men every evening perform the dance *Katináh*, and all those taking part in the dance have their faces blackened. — The red painting again is applied as a means of giving the body strength and as a direct protection against evil spirits causing sickness.

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M [751]

Many *personal ornaments* of the Chaco Indians, for instance ear-tubes, necklaces, feather ornaments etc., are of the nature of charms or amulets against evil spirits. The feather ornaments most customary among the Chaco tribes are ostrich plumes, and these, as I have shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* have originally not been decorations in the civilized sense of the word, but magical charms, a character which they still preserve for instance among such tribes as the Chamacoco and Lenguas in Paraguay. Among the Choroti, who likewise at their great feasts in December and January wear great ostrich plumes as ornaments, this is not equally conspicuous in accordance with the fact that in many cases the Choroti culture shows traces of an incipient degeneration. On the other hand, in the description I have given before of a Mataco dance performed to conjure disease demons and in which the sorcerers had ostrich feathers fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist,[1]) the »mystic» significance of these »ornaments» is quite obvious. Similarly, when another writer states that the Mataco in some parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance, or wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets.[2]) one cannot fail to recognize superstitious motives behind these arrangements.

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[1]) See *supra*, p. 137.

[2]) Baldrich. *Las comarcas virgenes*, p. 231.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

He can be near the Pilcomayo[1] or in the bush without losing his way.

To meet a *welán* means death. Only the medicine-men are allowed to speak to them without danger. If a person is stolen by a *welán* he will become a medicine-man for he understands the ways and the language of the *welán*. The *welán* appear only at night. In order to ask them questions it is necessary to apply to a medicine-man who knows their language. The medicine-man enters a *yuchan* tree, the *welán* blows on him and the medicine-man in turn blows upon the people. By night the *welán* come to visit the medicine-men.

When a *welán* takes a person away that person can no longer speak and does not wish to remain at home any longer. He must be sung over for a month, at the end of which time he becomes a medicine-man.

55. Origin of Disease

A man was caught by a *welán* who made him a chief *welán*. The man who had become a *welán* changed his mother into one also. One day a man died and the people charged the *welán*-man with his death. They invited the *welán* to visit them under the pretence of presenting him with a sheep. The man accepted the invitation but before going he told his mother he would probably not return again. He went to the others who were glad to have him accept their invitation. They gave him a sheep, asking him to eat it immediately, but the *welán* refused and said that he would like to eat it upon reaching his home. So he went taking the animal with him. The men who had planned to kill him ran ahead and hid themselves on the path he was following. When they heard the bleating of the sheep they shot at him and the *welán*-man was mortally wounded. Feeling how deep the point of the arrow had penetrated he

[1] The big swamps formed by the Pilcomayo are real labyrinths in which one may become lost.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

of the dead the *āhat* hunts, gathers fruit and goes fishing for food. When he arrives at the abode of the dead, his people come to meet him and they take him to their house.

6) The dead inhabit a region of their own situated under the one we live in. When it is daylight here it is dark in their region.

The *āhat* sleep during the day and at night search for food. They feed on dead animals and fish. Their life is exactly the same as that of living persons. They have underground fields and lagoons. They cultivate the earth the same as we do, raise animals and go fishing.

The *āhat* fight each other like the living Bolivians and Paraguayans do. The spirits of the Matako are at war with those of the Toba.

7) A dead person is called an *āhat*. The *āhat* live in the bush and appear only at night. We do not know exactly what they do in the bush nor what they eat. Some of them may be good. The medicine-men may talk with them and learn what is going to happen. For instance, they predict disease and future death.

8) When a man sees an *āhat* he will die unless he is a medicine-man. When a person is dying an *āhat* comes and steals his fire.

9) When the north wind blows very hard, the *āhat* leave their abode and walk about the earth looking for uninhabited places. If they see a man they vanish under the earth, but sometimes they are seen from afar. Frequently the *āhat* transform themselves into the north wind, which brings storms.

10) If you dream that you are visiting the land of the *āhat* and one of them invites you to eat, you must refuse. If you accept you may die during the following year.

II. The Medicine-men and the Big Fire

A medicine-man may call on the Big Fire at the end of the world. On the journey he crosses first a rainy area and then he comes to a dark zone where it is impossible to see.

156 To pass through this darkness the medicine-man changes into a species of owl (*sinalčǫ́*). This is a bird who travels 773 by night and whose eyes are like lanterns. In this disguise he is able to fly in the dark. After crossing the dark area he changes himself into a (white aquatic bird with red-circled eyes. When he arrives at the Big Fire's house he changes himself into a *carancho* and in this last disguise he calls on the Big Fire. They get acquainted and are very friendly. Later the *carancho* changes himself into a beautiful and well dressed woman. Big Fire is on good terms with the beautiful woman. Soon she becomes a man again. Big Fire asks the medicine-man if there is much bush in his country. The medicine-man takes care not to mention straw, bushes or trees, otherwise Big Fire will eat them up. The medicine-man goes home.

III. The Medicine-men

156 A man who wants to become a medicine-man must eat raw dog flesh. Ordinarily the candidate slays a young pup eats its flesh, and buries its head and skin very carefully.

156 Medicine dances are taught the prospective medicine-men by demons or spirits who give them their power. The *welán* 776 are the spirits who are the most inclined to instruct men in the art of magic. The ordinary method in this procedure is as follows: The soul of a man is ravished by a *welán* and shut into a tree. There the man's soul remains captive and the *welán* teaches it the language of the spirit, then the *welán* blows on the prospective medicine-man and he thus acquires the power to treat sick people who come to him, using the same method. Medicine-men are constantly in touch with the spirits. They meet them at night and talk with them. The spirits have a stick called *laḳaaLoi* which contains their souls and this they give to their friends, the medicine-men.

156 Some women may acquire medical knowledge, but the Indians never consider them as smart as male doctors.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

Young men seen dancing while an old medicine-man is performing a treatment are practicing the fundamentals of the art before becoming full fledged doctors. Not all succeed for the trials laid on the medicine-man's soul during the journey to the spirits are hard and many give up.

When a medicine-man performs his ceremonies, or as the natives say »*dice misa*», he changes himself into a white bird called *yulo* in Spanish. The medicine-man is said to transform himself into a bird, but when asked how such a change occurs without the body of the magician undergoing a change, the natives explained that only the soul of the man becomes a bird. In order to send his soul abroad in the shape of a bird the medicine-man plays for a long time on a flute made of the bone of a *yulo* bird. By so doing he creates an intimate contact between himself and the bird, but the real transformation occurs only after he has snuffed a powder called *hatax*. This intoxicating powder is prepared from the seeds of the *sebil* (*hatek*), a very common tree which grows abundantly in the Chaco and in the north of Argentina. The seeds are gathered, parched and pounded in a wooden mortar. The powder is exposed to the air a long time and then put in a calabash that has been used by medicine-men during their ceremonies. When the medicine-man has changed himself or his soul into a bird he goes into the sky »like an airplane» and calls on Rain to make him fall. To meet Rain he must enter his house through a very narrow door.

Just before sowing time the medicine-men go up into the sky to get rain. Without their aid the crop would dry up. Thus at the village Km. 600, all the cattle would have died had it not been for the Matako medicine-men who helped the white men by calling on the rain.

Old people say that once there was a heavy rain and some children became frightened and the Rain took them up into the heavens. A medicine-man in the form of a bird went up to bring them back.

756 The medicine-men who have snuffed the powder of *sebil* seeds (*natax*) and gone into a trance see everything, especially the disease demons. They also see bad medicine-men. When in this state they may also call on the spirits of the dead (*āhat*). Such visits to the dead may sometimes help to cure a patient, for if it is the spirit of a dead person who caused the sickness, he can also take it away. A medicine-man has to pay the disease demon when he cures somebody and so he in turn charges the patient. The fees of a medicine-man are extremely high. My informant Pedro, for instance, has paid a poncho (value of 18 pesos) for being cured of snake bite. If the patient dies, the medicine-man is not entitled to a fee, even a very small one. However, his professional fame is not lessened.

If a medicine-man has not succeeded in effecting a cure, another one is called in, but then the task is more difficult as the disease has lost its temper. It is also important to call the right specialist. Certain doctors have acquired fame for curing particular diseases. Snake bites are usually treated by special medicine-men.

756 When medicine-men perform magical rites, a very big
787 tree covered with green leaves, similar to those of a palm
761 tree and also extremely thick, appears before them. This tree always emits a noise which only medicine-men perceive. If this same tree appears to the medicine-men without leaves and quite dry, it presages death for him. He then knows that he has only one year to live. Through magic the medicine-man knows when his last moment is near. He has only to let the tree come. When his time arrives the magic tree comes down from the sky, stops at a certain height above the ground near the medicine-man, who throws himself on the ground, and as soon as he has breathed his last the tree gets up and bursts »like a bomb«. It is the end
[775] for the medicine-man and the tree. The soul of the dead medicine-man goes to the sky to the place where the tree had been.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

The medicine-man always knows beforehand when the red grasshopper (*čol*) will come. The striped grasshopper (*talesai*) lives inside a kind of very big gourd (*wotsotáx*). The grasshoppers belong to a master who sends them everywhere. During the summer they are out but at the first cold weather, they return to their squash.

Each year in the month of August, the medicine-men have a ceremony in order to go and see the *lachiwana* bees to ask them to come down to earth once more. For this event the medicine-men snuff *hatax* powder. They go up where the mother of all bees lives. She is as large as a house. To reach her the medicine-men transform themselves into *aguaraguasu* (*Canis jubatus*). The mother of the bees requires presents since she is afraid that by burning the old prairies her children might get burned too.

If someone speaks ill of a medicine-man, the latter's familiar spirit may enter the offender's body and thus avenge the insult. The soul of the medicine-man (*táxumit*) is ferocious. When the medicine-man is at odds with someone, his *táxumit* inflicts illness on the person with whom he is angry and no one except the medicine-man is able to cure the victim. It is wise therefore to stay on good terms with medicine-men.

IV. The Sun and the Medicine-men

The medicine-men may go and visit the Sun, Moon, the Night, the Rain and the Big Fire to make friends with them. During these trips they always go in gangs led by an older man who is expert in the difficult art of overcoming the numerous obstacles they meet on the way. He is the spiritual father of the younger medicine-men. If wandering medicine-men meet those of other villages, they fight and the spirits of those wounded or killed during the trips will be sick or will die on earth, for all that happens to the spirit must inevitably happen to the body. Medicine-men never fight on earth, and only while under the influence of *hatax* do

756 they fight in the sky. Upon awakening a vanquished medicine-man informs his family of his defeat.

Medicine-men like to visit the Sun for he is like a peddler, 756 he knows everything. To protect the entrance to his abode 821 the Sun has made a slippery trail. Those who step on it slip down and break their necks. The Sun gets the dead and eats them, generally broiled or stewed. The medicine-men know how to escape this danger. They transform themselves into wax and thus stick to the trail, crossing it without running the risk of being devoured by the Sun. The Sun closes the entrance to his abode with a sort of trap. This trap consists of two beams which knock against each other and crush those who try to get between them. Medicine-men who have had no experience get crushed. Those who are skillful transform themselves into humming birds (*cinax*) and thus pass quickly between the beams before they have time to close together. Behind the beams the sun has stretched traps. The medicine-men without experience get caught by their thumbs in these traps. The Sun gets them and kills them. Great medicine-men change into eels and creep between the meshes, thus escaping.

The Sun's abode is surrounded by a palisade of cacti with only one small window. The medicine-men can fly over it if they become humming birds, or they can change into rodents (*sičúm*, a rodent with a flat head) and dig a cave under it. The Sun is very surprised when medicine-men come to him in spite of beams, traps and fences. He goes to his traps and is quite amazed when he does not find anybody in them. When this occurs he has no food. If the soul of a medicine-man is eaten by the Sun, the medicine-man who has stayed on earth dies. When a medicine-man arrives at the Sun's house, after having overcome all the obstacles, he is welcomed by the Sun, who is no longer angry, and in order for the sorcerer to come nearer, the Sun turns colder. Otherwise it would be impossible to approach within 500 yards of him because he burns everything. The Sun asks the medi-

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

cine-man why he has come. He answers, »I came to have a talk, to call on you and become your friend.» They become friends.

V. Origin of the Rio Bermejo

The Rio Bermejo is very deep for it was dug by a big *tatu careta* (giant armadillo) who wanted to go to the source of the river.

VI. The New Moon

When there is a new moon, the Indians dance and beat on their drums (*pimpim*). The man who plays a drum wears a belt with hanging pendants of metal, hoofs and so on. They put water into the drum so that the hide will not get dry.

VII. Menstruation

It is the moon who sleeps first with the girls and that is why they menstruate. When a young girl is menstruating for the first time, she must begin working and doing all she will have to do later on. If she does not keep active during this period, then she will be lazy all her life. She must be in semi-seclusion for five days, only going out with her father's permission. She may not marry or have sexual intercourse until after her first menstruation. When a woman is menstruating, she must not go to the bush where she could easily become frightened and die.

VIII. Eclipses

An eclipse of the sun or moon foretells disease. When either the sun or moon becomes angry with men it covers itself. To have it uncover it is necessary to beat drums, shout, sing and to make all kinds of noise. When the sun is covered one may expect smallpox.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

angry. No one is allowed to call on her and only very young boys may go into her house. She speaks only when it is necessary to get things she needs.

A medicine-woman of the village of Las Lomitas, whose husband died a year before, left her retreat in order to cure a sick child belonging to her family. After every treatment she went back to her hut. The child recovered in five days and she resumed her mourning. At no time did she speak with other members of her family.

In the morning and afternoon a widow plays a drum and weeps. Thus she tries to forget her husband but some time later she will think of him again and then go back to her drum. During this period she cuts her hair three times and eats her food with a fork and spoon.

If a woman looses her husband shortly after marriage, he may call on her frequently but if she marries another man before two years have elapsed the spirit of her late husband kills her new husband. After two years the dead man has forgotten his wife and marries a female spirit. When a widow dies her spirit goes to her husband and they live together as they did on earth. Upon the death of a husband the children are bound to support their mother unless she marries again after the two years of mourning.

XX. Miscellanea

a) *Dreams*

Dreams are of exceptional importance to the Matako who believe that everything which happens in dreams will come to pass in real life. The dream is the life of the soul which after death becomes a spirit. During sleep the soul is released to wander about in the world where it sees what will happen in material life. Ordinary men as well as medicine-men can identify images seen in dreams. Thus the Matako Indians expect to realize in life the accomplishment

776 The Indians will willingly speak about the lewo, mythical animals which live in the lakes and which look like serpents. Their [824] breath forms the rainbow (lewo-tutsax, which means lewo breath). [841] The lewo have a horror of women during the period of menstruation and if any woman should approach a pool or river in that state, the lewo will call up a tempest.

The Witch Doctors

756 The witch doctors get their power from the spirits, who teach them the magic dances. The soul of a witch doctor can be snatched away by a wilan or spirit and shut up in a tree. The spirit teaches him the language of the spirits and when his education is complete the spirit blows upon the novice and confers upon him the power of caring for the sick by the same means, that is, by blowing upon them. The meetings between spirits and witch doctors are very frequent, and take place at night.

In order to take the soul out of the body and send it on a supernatural mission, the witch doctors inhale up their noses a powder made [278] with roasted grains of sebil (Piptadenia sp.) to which they sometimes [824] add powdered tobacco. These inhalations cause them to become dazed [16] and then it is that the witch doctor's soul abandons his body and turns into an insect or a bird--usually the yulo--and goes off to alight on a tree which stands in the middle of a lake. This tree is perpetually shaking and it is extremely difficult to stay on it. A grave misfortune overtakes those who fall for they are immediately devoured by the palometas ["piranãs" - a laterally flattened, ferocious, small fish - Translator] and crocodiles which swam in the lake. If the witch doctors are expert in their art they change themselves into lizards and so manage to stay on the tree. It is supposed that each witch doctor owns a branch of that tree which is closely allied with his destiny. While the leaves remain green the witch doctor enjoys good health and is in no danger but as soon as the branch starts to wither then his troubles begin.

[821] The witch doctors can predict good and bad weather for a long time in advance, for on their journeyings they see the green and dry leaves corresponding to the good and bad seasons of the year.

●756 The witch doctors have, also, the power of turning themselves into animals or fire that licks up the underbrush in their path.

In order to overcome diseases, the witch doctors make use of [825] small wands which the spirits have given them; they use also the wings of several birls (yulo, carancho).

Animals as well as men can be treated by the witch doctors. An informant described to me the treatment which was given to a horse. The witch doctor first recited an enchantment and then applied suction to the horse's rump until he was able to extract a small piece of wood which he said was the cause of the malady.

[754] Some witch doctors are extremely dangerous. They start by devouring dogs and then go on to attack men. It is almost impossible to put an end to their criminal career for they revive if they are killed and if they are burned to death they will still return.

[362] Some women can become witch doctors, although they enjoy far less prestige than do the man. Their vocation is made apparent by the following signs: they spend hours on end crouched over the ground, continually swaying back and forth, finally they make an attempt to flee into the underbrush and their strength is such that several men cannot restrain them. Once off in the bush, they tear off their [17] clothes and climb a tree, where they remain for several days swaying and singing

Magic

789 609 The Matacos of San Andres complain bitterly that their neighbors the Tobas of the Pilcomayo river are great practitioners of magic. During the period of my stay at their village a Toba arrived to visit one of his friends. Not finding him at home he went to several huts in the hope of finding him. When he left, the Matacos accused him of witchcraft and said that his comings and goings were only to gather leavings (hair, nail parings, pieces of cloth, etc.) belonging to the people he had visited. The fact is that many of the persons whose houses the Toba visited became sick, which only confirmed the Matacos' suspicions. Nevertheless no sanction whatever came from this to the supposed criminal.

/211/

755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] [292] [237] [302] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

/212 cont./

755 The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical
756 to the one the medicine men make heard during the treatment
783 of illnesses. The singing was given rhythm by the rattling of
796 the maracas, and, from time to time, by the sound of the bands of rattles and hoofs and blasts of the whistles. Each whistle blast marks a new stage in the performances connected with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine man, as well as his arrival or departure from a given place). The maraca was sometimes held in a threatening manner as if to repulse an invisible being; the same gesture was made by those who held ostrich feathers. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, one or another of the officiants took the ha'tax powder. One of the officiants ran behind and in front of his colleagues, dusting them from head to toe with a feather in his hand; he was assisted by another man, who made the rattles and little bells on their backs jingle. After having taken some ha'tax the officiants began to sing again, to brandish their maracas, and to make threatening gestures with them or with the feathers. Some medicine men were singing the song appropriate for their spirits, without concerning themselves with the recitative chants of their confreres.

The direct offensive against the illness followed these preliminaries: some individuals stopped out of the row, brandishing their maracas and feathers violently, and then returned to their places. Another began to throw up some dirt with his foot and was immediately followed by another who, seizing handfuls of dust, threw it in front of himself. Then one of them unsheathed his liana-cutter and began to cut the grass around him; his example was followed by almost the entire group, which threw itself into the assault on the illness. Some obstinately set upon one spot, as if they had at last driven the enemy into a corner, and beat it with redoubled blows of their liana-cutters or feather brooms, and then stamped on it as though they were burying their victim. The attack on the illness lasted rather long and was executed with great seriousness.

/212 cont./

755 756 783 796 The follow-up to the ceremony was what we could call a general disinfection. The medicine men began by dusting each other off, making their rattles jingle right against the bodies of their colleagues, and blowing on the tops of their heads or the napes of their necks, as is done for illness. Then all the men, women, and children who had attended the ceremony as spectators were summoned. They sat down and the medicine men and medicine women /given in English/ came to pass their feather brooms over their bodies, to blow on their heads, and to make the rattles jingle along their bodies. These rites were carried out just as scrupulously for the children as for the adults.

/213/ My friend Sanchez was the object of particular pains; after the chief medicine man in person had blown over him, he was assisted by four medicine men, two of whom blew and sang over him, while the other two shook rattles, bells, and maracas.

Those of the medicine men who were not occupied with the disinfecting turned halfway around and repeated all the gestures which they had previously carried out. From time to time one or another again left the row to mow down the grass and furiously engulf the illness. The whistles succeeded each another at intervals which were ever closer together, and the rattles were shaken with more energy and insistence.

The ceremony was over when all the members of the community were considered relieved of the evil influences with which they had been impregnated.

Notes

[164] [231] 1. The illness to be expelled was hoof-and-mouth disease, with which the livestock was then stricken, and which had had unfortunate consequences on the health of the people. Several who had eaten contaminated meat had fallen ill.

/213 cont./

755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image"
●756 (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness,
774 but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly
825 malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mɨsa', earth bees.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by
naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and
[292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[533] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in
[535] place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

/217 cont./

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(April 2, 1933)

755 [55] A woman being sick, she was taken care of, but as she was less rich, the ceremony had a more modest character. Opposite the sick woman's house they put up a tent under which she lay down. The offerings were only some cloths and string bags. At my arrival the medicine man was in the act of speaking with the illness, while an old woman, also a medicine woman, was singing and blowing on the sick woman. The others were talking among themselves, without appearing to be very concerned [213] with what was going on. After an interruption, during which everyone drank the wine demanded by the illness, a man began to run around the sick woman, singing, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine man continued to speak with the illness, while the woman blew on the sick woman and another medicine man put a certain number of covers from illustrated newspapers and 20-centavo popular novels around her head. The runner stopped and the chief medicine man began to talk with the others. Everyone sat down, drinking water, and two women began to walk rapidly around the others, singing. One of them stopped, and a little later the other did 755 the same. Then all the assistants began to dance, accompanied 763 by hiccups from the sick woman, who appeared to be getting worse and worse; in fact she died in the middle of the ceremony.

Immediately after the death the dance was stopped; the old women ran around the tent, shaking maracas and singing, while two men laid the dead woman on her right side, bending her legs and crossing (or bending) her arms over her breast. She was wrapped in the cloths on which she had been lying and [152] carried to her house. The medicine men stripped themselves [756] quietly while all the women of the village wailed the customary lamentations.

Plate VIII

292
755
756

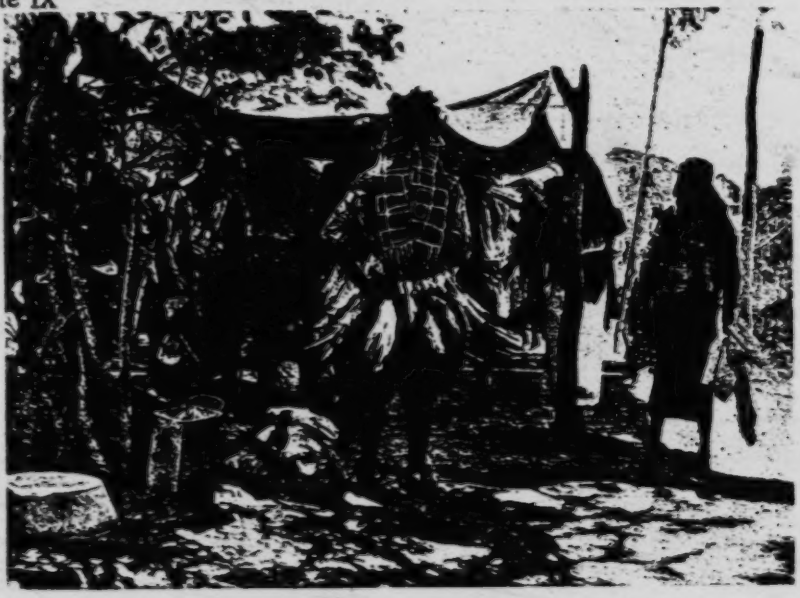
A. The medicine men sing to the rhythm of the maracas.

B. Threat by the medicine men; a whistle announcing a transformation.

[End Plate 1]

Plate IX

755
756
291
292



[415]

A. Dance around a sick woman.

B. Dance around a sick woman.

[End Plate 2]

Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6

M /320 cont./
771 They have a vague idea of superior beings, whom they fear
776 without worshiping them; the cleverest one becomes the sorcerer
● 756 and exploits the poverty of his companions, especially today when
648 they are earning money from the whites, to whom they lend im-
464 portant services.

M They frequently move from the region that they occupy to
167 the Argentine Republic; they work, dress, learn some Spanish
177 and a slight smattering of civilization, and return to their lands to live as before.

Choroti

Ci The zone located southeast of Toba territory is occupied
131 by the Choroti Indians, who have their own language. They
197 occupy the geographic degree 22° 30' latitude and 64° 10' longitude, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo River.

Ci They are quite numerous and peaceful, and they are not
181 treacherous like their neighbors, the Toba. Nevertheless, they
648 inspire respect in all the neighboring tribes; if a mission were to be established at said degree, the conquest of all the Bolivian territory /321/ up to 24° would be accomplished without the need of so many small forts, which are such a great expense to the Nation and which do not create centers of trade and civilization.

Ci Father Gianelli in years past visited the Choroti Indians,
797 was received with displays of affection and appreciation, and
177 found among them good inclinations toward becoming civilized, but at that time the harvest was too much for so few evangelical workers.

Ci The Choroti are not so lazy and savage as the other tribes;
181 they devote themselves to the cultivation of a few seeds and to
241 the raising of cattle, although on a small scale. They are also
231 hunters, however, and when they occupy the banks of the
224 Pilcomayo, they take advantage of the fruits the river brings them, especially in the great floods.

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./

Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464]

In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101

These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197

They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224

Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756]

They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.